

Rep. Elder offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 134.

A resolution to memorialize the President and Congress of the United States to maintain the U.S. Surface Transportation Board's statutory authority to encourage more competition in the rail sector and to provide a reasonable and cost-effective method that rail shippers can use to challenge unreasonable rail rates.

Whereas, Today's rail industry is exempt from U.S. antitrust laws and is characterized by a lack of competition. Many agricultural shippers are served by only one railroad and have no cost-effective transportation alternatives to ship produce to customers. Rail shipping rates have risen rapidly and repeatedly due to this railroad monopoly; and

Whereas, Access to efficient and cost-effective rail transportation is essential to not only Michigan agriculture but to the entire nation. Michigan agriculture relies on freight rail service to move products to markets throughout the nation and around the world. Increased rates are largely passed back to farmers which further depress cash prices to the detriment of Michigan farmers; and

Whereas, The independent U.S. Surface Transportation Board (STB) is the sole federal agency that has any economic regulatory oversight of the rail industry. The statutory mandate for the STB to fully review and approve major, market-shifting moves by rail companies is important to maintain a degree of fairness in the freight rail marketplace. With rising rates, failing reliability, and aging infrastructure, large rail companies must be subject to effective regulation. Competitive rail service with balanced STB oversight is a win for Michigan agriculture and all Americans; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we memorialize the President and Congress of the United States to maintain the U.S. Surface Transportation Board's statutory authority to encourage more competition in the rail sector and to provide a reasonable and cost-effective method that rail shippers can use to challenge unreasonable rail rates; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.